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SUMMARY**THE SOVIET ARMY AND RAILWAY TRANSPORT**

A. Vlasov
Gen.-major of Tech Troops

Railway transport operated successfully in World War II, because like other branches of the national economy it had been prepared during the Five-Year Plans for active defense of the homeland.

Freight traffic in 1940 was 36 times as great as in 1920, and the total trackage had grown to 109,300 kilometers as compared with 28,500 kilometers in prerevolutionary Russia. The average 24-hour freight load had risen from 27,400 cars in 1913 to 97,000 cars in 1940.

Enemy air attacks on our rail transport failed to sever our connections with the rear at any time during the war, and the supply of military freight continued despite the heavy burden of evacuations from threatened areas. Approximately 1.5 million railroad cars, or 30,000 trains, carried evacuation shipments and millions of Soviet citizens out of threatened areas during the first 6 months of the war. The work of the Gor'kiy, Moscow-Ryazan, Yaroslavl' and Eastern Railroad Systems during the battle of Moscow is famous. Ural, Siberian, and Far Eastern divisions were brought in trainloads at a speed of 800-900 kilometers every 24 hours. The railroads, in fulfilling these tasks, contributed materially to the rout of German forces around Moscow.

During the battle of Stalingrad, 1.5 times as many trains went over the single-track Povorino-Ilovlya sector as before the war.

During November the Southeastern Railroad System's freight handling averaged 16 full trains per 24-hour day in support of the encirclement of the 300,000-man German army.

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In the vicinity of Leningrad, new lines were built to effect the supply and liberation of the blockaded city.

This single-track Kastornaya-Marmyzi-Kursk line carried tremendous amounts of freight during the Kursk operation.

Railroads brought up the reserves that stopped the German thrust toward Zhitomir and Korosten' in November 1943.

Among other railways of decisive importance during the war were the Sonkovo-Medvedevo, Bologoye-Valday, and Urbakh-Astrakhan'.

In 1944, arms, ammunition and materiel constituted 60 percent of freight handling for transport to the front line, and food and forage 23 percent. In December 1916 munitions were only 4 percent and food and forage 75 percent of total freight. Between 1942 and 1944, the transport of tanks and self-propelled artillery increased 4.5 times, trucks 2.2 times, ammunition more than twice, and fuel 2.5 times.

In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Germany, Manchuria and Korea, railroad units maintained transport for our field forces. Large-scale transfer of Russian rolling stock to western European railways was organized, and changing of wheel couples to European gauges without unloading the cars was widely practiced.

In following our advances, railway restoration proceeded at an average rate of 10-15 kilometers per day in some sectors. Reconstruction of the Smolensk-Minsk-Warsaw line averaged 16.5 kilometers every 24 hours, while the rate on the Pskov-Dvinsk line was 15 kilometers every 24 hours. In certain periods the speed of reconstruction reached 21 kilometers per 24-hour day.

Despite enemy raids, railroad forces and special units kept such vital terminals as Murmansk, Volkhovstroy, Bologoye, Kursk, Darnitsa, Kupyansk, Likhaya and others in operation.

In the concluding stages of the Berlin operation, railway transport did a brilliant job, reconstructing all necessary front line rails, equipping loading and unloading installations and preparing for large-scale movement of troops and supplies. Railroad troop units showed high combat morale, and military trains advanced to the front in an organized manner and without delays, despite enemy air and artillery bombardments.

After the victory the railways rendered great service in the return of demobilized soldiers in 1945-1946.

Throughout the history of the Soviet Army, railroad men have cooperated closely with units of Military Communications Transport of the Armed Forces in the rear, center and front.

The tasks of the postwar Five-Year Plan for Soviet railroad men form an important contribution to the strengthening of USSR economic-military might. As Stalin has pointed out, "While developing peaceful, socialist construction we must not forget for a minute the intrigues of international reaction which plot a new war. We must, as Lenin exhorted, be constantly on the alert, give attention to our armed forces and strengthen the country's defensive capacity."

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